
Higher Education Committee

HCR 4404

Brief Description: Approving the 2004 update to the state comprehensive plan for workforce training.

Sponsors: Representatives Kenney, Cox, Sells, Priest, Jarrett, Conway, Ormsby and Linville; by request of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Approves the 2004 update to the state comprehensive plan for workforce training by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board), which includes six strategic opportunities to improve the state's workforce training and education system.

Hearing Date: 2/15/05

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

The Workforce Board was created in 1991 to do strategic planning and evaluation of the various components of the state's workforce training system and to advocate for meeting the education and training needs of employers and workers. The Workforce Board focuses on training and jobs that require less than a baccalaureate degree.

One of the Workforce Board's responsibilities is to develop a state comprehensive plan for workforce training and education. The plan is developed based on economic, labor market, and population trends; industry and occupational forecasts; evaluations of training programs; and needs of employers, program participants, and workers. Each of the agencies on the Workforce Board is expected to create operating plans for their workforce development efforts that are consistent with the comprehensive plan. These include the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Employment Security Department.

The Workforce Board is required to update the comprehensive plan every two years and submit it to the Governor and the Legislature. After public hearings, the Legislature is to approve the plan through concurrent resolution or recommend changes. The Workforce Board's 2004 plan, "High Skills, High Wages 2004," was submitted in October 2004.

Summary of Bill:

The state faces challenges in the workforce to close the gap in supply and demand for skilled workers; enable workers to fully benefit from a changing economy; and assist disadvantaged youth, persons with disabilities, recent immigrants, and low-wage workers in moving up the job ladder.

The state comprehensive plan for workforce training and education prepared by the Workforce Board establishes six strategic opportunities:

1. Increasing postsecondary education and training capacity at the sub-baccalaureate level and targeting resources to expand capacity in high demand programs while ensuring that individuals have access to a broad range of opportunities;
2. Reducing dropouts and holding schools accountable for retaining students through graduation;
3. Expanding and sustaining industry skill panels using partnerships of employers, educators and labor to foster innovative workforce training;
4. Increasing training linked to retention support for low-income individuals;
5. Increasing basic skills and English as a second language instruction that is integrated with occupational skills training; and
6. Expanding customized training for incumbent workers.

The Workforce Board used an inclusive process to develop consensus on the priorities identified in the plan, and secured the unanimous endorsement of critical constituencies. Therefore, the House of Representatives and the Senate approve the 2004 update to the state comprehensive plan for workforce training.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.